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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/627,858	07/25/2003	Walter G. Dixon	062891.0945	2644
5073	7590	03/28/2006	EXAMINER	
BAKER BOTTS L.L.P. 2001 ROSS AVENUE SUITE 600 DALLAS, TX 75201-2980				LOHN, JOSHUA A
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
		2114		

DATE MAILED: 03/28/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<i>Office Action Summary</i>	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/627,858	DIXON ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Joshua A. Lohn	2114

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 July 2003.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-26 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) Claim(s) 1-26 is/are rejected.
7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on 25 July 2003 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 7/25/2003.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ .
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: ____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

Claim 6 is objected to because of the following informalities: Claim 6 should end with a period, and not a semi-colon. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-3, 9, 11-14, 16-19, and 22-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Merchant et al., United States Patent Application Publication number 2004/0230862, filed May 16, 2003.

As per claim 1, Merchant discloses a method for providing redundant data load sharing in a distributed network, comprising: receiving a data entry (Merchant, ¶0113, where the data stores are the data entries being stored); storing the data entry in a first one and a second one of a plurality of nodes (Merchant, ¶0118, where the entries are replicated across multiple nodes); identifying a failure of the second one of the plurality of nodes (Merchant, ¶0132, where faulty nodes can be identified); replicating the data entry in the second one of the plurality of nodes at a third one of the plurality of nodes in response to a failure in the second one of the plurality of

nodes (Merchant ¶0132-¶0137, where the removal of a faulty node will result in the replication of all data entries that were stored thereon to another node in the system to maintain the correct number of replicas).

As per claim 2, Merchant further discloses the method of claim 1, further comprising: determining whether there is sufficient capacity in the distributed network to handle data entry replication in response to the failure of the second one of the plurality of nodes (Merchant, ¶0133-¶0134, where capacity requirements are checked).

As per claim 3, Merchant further discloses the method of claim 2, further comprising: preventing replication of the data entry at the third one of the plurality of nodes in response to insufficient capacity in the distributed network (Merchant, ¶0134, where replication is held off when no satisfactory node is detected).

As per claim 9, Merchant further discloses the method of claim 1, further comprising: establishing a capacity for the distributed network, the capacity representing an amount of data to be stored in the distributed network (Merchant, ¶0116-¶0118, where the nodes that meet the requirements for the redundancy network); establishing a minimum number of the plurality of nodes required to provide redundancy in the distributed network (Merchant, ¶0118, where M represents the minimum number of nodes required for redundancy).

As per claim 11, Merchant discloses a system for providing redundant data load sharing in a distributed network, comprising: a plurality of nodes (Merchant, ¶0116), a first one of the plurality of nodes operable to receive and store a data entry (Merchant, ¶0118), providing a

replicate data entry to a second one of the plurality of nodes (Merchant, ¶0123-¶0131, where the loading of each node involves the providing of data between nodes); determine a failure of the second one of the plurality of nodes (Merchant, ¶0132-¶0137, where a faulty node is detected by all nodes in the determination of capacity for handling the failure); providing the replicate data entry to a third one of the plurality of nodes in response to failure of the second one of the plurality of nodes (Merchant, ¶0134-0137, where the information is replicated to an additional node). All these actions can be performed by the first node on the system, since each storage node can operate the methods as part of a distributed application (Merchant, ¶0112).

As per claim 12, Merchant further discloses the system of claim 11, wherein each node includes a distributed control function operable to control storage and replication of the data entry (Merchant, ¶0112).

As per claim 13, Merchant further discloses the system of claim 11, wherein the first one of the plurality of nodes is operable to determine whether there is sufficient capacity in the distributed network to handle data entry replication in response to the failure of the second one of the plurality of nodes (Merchant, ¶0133-¶0134, where the capacity is checked).

As per claim 14, Merchant and Ohran further disclose the system of claim 13, wherein the first one of the plurality of nodes is operable to prevent replication of the data entry at the third one of the plurality of nodes in response to insufficient capacity in the distributed network (Merchant, ¶0134, where replication is prevented when no node of sufficient capacity exists).

As per claim 16, Merchant further discloses the system of claim 11, wherein the capacity of each of the plurality of nodes is adjusted in response to the addition of a new node (Merchant, ¶0124-¶0131).

As per claims 17-19, these claims are merely a system for executing the methods of claims 1-3 rejected above. Merchant discloses a system, see figure 1, and as such the rejections of claims 1-3 are applicable to claims 17-19 as well.

As per claims 22-24, these claims are merely a computer program for executing the methods of claims 1-3 rejected above. Merchant discloses the use of a computer program, see ¶0112, and as such the rejections of claims 1-3 are applicable to claims 22-24 as well.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 4-8, 10, 15, 20, 21, 25, and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Merchant in view of Ohran et al., United States Patent number 5,812,748, published September 22, 1998.

As per claim 4, Merchant discloses the method of claim 3, including the use of a distributed network, but fails to disclose the additional limitation of adjusting the capacity of the distributed network in response to the failure, in order to store new data entries without replication.

Ohran discloses adjusting the capacity of a network in response to the failure of a node in order to store new data entries without replication (Ohran, col. 7, lines 44-55).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to include the capacity adjustment of Ohran in the invention of Merchant.

This would have been obvious because Merchant discloses a means for dealing with capacity shortage by reducing the size of the data to be replicated (Merchant, ¶0134). While this method is effective in allowing the required degree of replication when small amounts of space are available on each storage node, it fails to include support for a condition in which no space is available for the replication. Ohran provides a system that allows for adjusting the replication

capacity attributes to provide a system in which data storage continues even if the minimum numbers of replica storage nodes are not available (Ohran, col. 7, lines 37-65, where replication is suspended when the storage for replication does not exist). The system of Ohran provides the system of Merchant with the obvious benefit of allowing continued, successful operation even when a less than the minimum numbers of replica storage nodes exist.

As per claim 5, Merchant discloses the method of claim 3 involving the replication of data entries in a distributed network (Merchant, ¶0118). Merchant fails to disclose identifying a recovery of the second one of the plurality of nodes and performing storage and replication of subsequent data in response to this recovery.

Ohran discloses the recovery of the second one of a plurality of storage nodes and performing storage and replication of subsequently received data entries in response to this recovery (Ohran, col. 7, line 62, through col. 8, line 22, where the connection of the failing storage system to the non-failing server represents the recovery of the second storage node that is then allowed to begin mirroring again, which allows the replication of subsequently received data entries).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to include the capacity adjustment and subsequent recovery of Ohran in the invention of Merchant.

This would have been obvious because Merchant discloses a means for dealing with capacity shortage by reducing the size of the data to be replicated (Merchant, ¶0134). While this method is effective in allowing the required degree of replication when small amounts of space are available on each storage node, it fails to include support for a condition in which no space is

available for the replication. Ohran provides a system that allows for adjusting the replication capacity attributes to provide a system in which data storage continues even if the minimum number of replica storage nodes are not available (Ohran, col. 7, lines 37-65, where replication is suspended when the storage for replication does not exist) and restoring replication following any recovery (Ohran, col. 7, line 62 through col. 8, line 22). The system of Ohran provides the system of Merchant with the obvious benefit of allowing continued, successful operation even when a less than the minimum number of replica storage nodes exist and allows for restoration to the desired replication following a recovery.

As per claim 6, Merchant and Ohran disclose the method of claim 5, further comprising: adjusting the capacity of the distributed network in response to the recovery of the second one of the plurality of nodes (Ohran, col. 7, line 8, lines 7-22, where the second node is shown in recovery, and Merchant, ¶0124-¶0125, where the addition of any storage device causes capacity adjustments).

As per claim 7, Merchant and Ohran disclose the method of claim 6, further comprising: performing replication of those data entries previously stored but not replicated as a result of the failure of the second one of the plurality of nodes (Ohran, col. 8, lines 13-17).

As per claim 8, Merchant discloses the method of claim 1 involving the replication of data entries in a distributed network (Merchant, ¶0118). Merchant fails to disclose identifying a recovery of the second one of the plurality of nodes and including the second one of the nodes in the storage and replication of subsequent data in response to this recovery.

Ohran discloses the recovery of the second one of a plurality of storage nodes and including this node in the storage and replication of subsequently received data entries in response to this recovery (Ohran, col. 7, line 62, through col. 8, line 22, where the connection of the failing storage system to the non-failing server represents the recovery of the second storage node that is then allowed to begin mirroring again, which allows the replication of subsequently received data entries).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to include the capacity adjustment and subsequent recovery of Ohran in the invention of Merchant.

This would have been obvious because Merchant discloses a means for dealing with capacity shortage by reducing the size of the data to be replicated (Merchant, ¶0134). While this method is effective in allowing the required degree of replication when small amounts of space are available on each storage node, it fails to include support for a condition in which no space is available for the replication. Ohran provides a system that allows for adjusting the replication capacity attributes to provide a system in which data storage continues even if the minimum number of replica storage nodes are not available (Ohran, col. 7, lines 37-65, where replication is suspended when the storage for replication does not exist) and restoring replication following any recovery (Ohran, col. 7, line 62 through col. 8, line 22). The system of Ohran provides the system of Merchant with the obvious benefit of allowing continued, successful operation even when a less than the minimum number of replica storage nodes exist and allows for restoration to the desired replication following a recovery.

As per claim 10, Merchant discloses the method of claim 9, including the establishment of a minimum number of nodes, but fails to disclose the additional limitation of maintaining at least one occurrence of all data entries should the number of nodes fall to one less than this minimum number.

Ohran discloses storing at least one occurrence of all data entries when the number of storage nodes is one less than the minimum for replication (Ohran, col. 7, lines 44-55).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to include the storage of at least one occurrence of Ohran in the invention of Merchant.

This would have been obvious because Merchant discloses a means for dealing with capacity shortage by reducing the size of the data to be replicated (Merchant, ¶0134). While this method is effective in allowing the required degree of replication when small amounts of space are available on each storage node, it fails to include support for a condition in which no space is available for the replication. Ohran provides a system that allows for adjusting the replication capacity attributes to provide a system in which data storage continues even if the minimum numbers of replica storage nodes are not available (Ohran, col. 7, lines 37-65, where replication is suspended when the storage for replication does not exist). The system of Ohran provides the system of Merchant with the obvious benefit of allowing continued, successful operation even when a less than the minimum numbers of replica storage nodes exist.

As per claim 15, Merchant discloses the method of claim 14, including the use of a distributed network, but fails to disclose the additional limitation of adjusting the capacity of the distributed network in response to the failure, in order to store new data entries without replication.

Ohran discloses adjusting the capacity of a network in response to the failure of a node in order to store new data entries without replication (Ohran, col. 7, lines 44-55).

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to include the capacity adjustment of Ohran in the invention of Merchant.

This would have been obvious because Merchant discloses a means for dealing with capacity shortage by reducing the size of the data to be replicated (Merchant, ¶0134). While this method is effective in allowing the required degree of replication when small amounts of space are available on each storage node, it fails to include support for a condition in which no space is available for the replication. Ohran provides a system that allows for adjusting the replication capacity attributes to provide a system in which data storage continues even if the minimum numbers of replica storage nodes are not available (Ohran, col. 7, lines 37-65, where replication is suspended when the storage for replication does not exist). The system of Ohran provides the system of Merchant with the obvious benefit of allowing continued, successful operation even when a less than the minimum numbers of replica storage nodes exist.

As per claims 20 and 21, these claims are merely a system for executing the methods of claims 4 and 5 rejected above. Merchant and Ohran disclose a system, see figure 1 of Merchant, and as such the rejections of claims 4 and 5 are applicable to claims 20 and 21 as well.

As per claims 25 and 26, these claims are merely a computer program for executing the methods of claims 4 and 5 rejected above. Merchant and Ohran disclose the use of a computer program, see ¶0112 of Merchant, and as such the rejections of claims 4 and 5 are applicable to claims 25 and 26 as well.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure is provided on form PTO-892.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joshua A. Lohn whose telephone number is (571) 272-3661. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8-4.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Scott Baderman can be reached on (571) 272-3644. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

JAL



SCOTT BADERMAN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER